

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A headband arrangement for applying a breathing mask to a user and having a flexible band body comprising upper and lower band portions for transmitting the mask holding forces required for applying the breathing mask, the upper band portion adapted to transmit mask holding forces to an upper portion of the mask and the lower band portion adapted to transmit mask holding forces to a lower portion of the mask, wherein at least portions of the band body are made of a foamed plastic material.
2. (Previously Presented) The headband arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the band body is formed by injecting a pore-forming plastic material in a molding space of a tool.
3. (Previously Presented) The headband arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the plastic material has a skin in the area of its outer surface.
4. (Previously Presented) The headband arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the band body includes a tensile proof insert embedded in the foamed plastic material, the tensile proof insert including a locking structure uncovered by the foamed plastic material.
5. (Previously Presented) The headband arrangement according to claim 4, wherein the insert is a dimensionally stable insert.

6. (Previously Presented) The headband arrangement according to claim 4, wherein the locking structure is structured to couple a band bracket portion in an adjustable manner.

7. (Previously Presented) The headband arrangement according to claim 4, wherein the locking structure is formed integrally with the foamed plastic material.

8. (Currently Amended) The headband arrangement according to claim 4, further comprising a slide element ~~which can be brought in different closing positions on~~attached to the locking structure in an adjustable manner.

9. (Previously Presented) The headband arrangement according to claim 8, wherein the slide element comprises a locking mechanism to lock the slide element on the locking structure.

Claims 10-21 (Canceled).

22. (Previously Presented) A headband arrangement for a mask, comprising:
an upper headband portion adapted to transmit mask holding forces to an upper portion of the mask and a lower headband portion adapted to transmit mask holding forces to a lower portion of the mask,
at least one headband portion of the upper and lower headband portions including a longitudinal recess and a mask connector in the form of an insert embedded into the recess of

the at least one headband portion, the mask connector structured to allow the mask to be attached to the headband arrangement in an adjustable manner.

23. (Previously Presented) A headband arrangement according to claim 22, wherein the at least one headband portion is made of a foamed plastic material.

24. (Previously Presented) A headband arrangement according to claim 23, wherein the insert is a tensile stiff insert embedded in the foamed plastic material.

25. (Previously Presented) A headband arrangement according to claim 24, wherein the tensile stiff insert includes a locking structure uncovered by the foamed plastic material.

26. (Currently Amended) A headband arrangement according to claim 25, further comprising a slide element ~~structured to slidably engage~~ engaged with the locking structure.

27. (Previously Presented) A headband arrangement according to claim 26, wherein the slide element includes a locking mechanism to lock the slide element on the locking structure.

28. (Previously Presented) A headband arrangement according to claim 26, wherein the slide element includes a bracket structured to receive a band portion that interconnects the slide element and the mask.

29. (Previously Presented) A headband arrangement according to claim 23, wherein the insert is integrally formed with the foamed plastic material.

30. (Previously Presented) A headband arrangement according to claim 23, wherein the foamed plastic material comprises a cushion layer adapted to engage the user's face in use.

31. (Previously Presented) The headband arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the upper and lower band portions are made of foamed plastic material.

32. (Previously Presented) The headband arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the upper and lower band portions include a pair of upper and lower band portions for transmitting the mask holding forces.

33. (Withdrawn) A breathing mask arrangement, comprising:
a mask; and
the headband arrangement according to claim 22.

34. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement for a breathing mask, comprising:
a pair of upper side band portions adapted to extend over the patient's ears and transmit mask holding forces to an upper portion of the breathing mask;
a pair of lower side band portions adapted to extend below the patient's ears and transmit mask holding forces to a lower portion of the breathing mask;

an upper rear band portion adapted to extend along a rear portion of the patient's head, the upper rear band portion provided between the upper side band portions;

a lower rear band portion adapted to extend along or adjacent a neck portion of the patient's head, the lower rear band portion provided between the lower side band portions;

wherein at least the upper rear band portion and the lower rear band portion include a foamed material.

35. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 34, wherein each of the upper and lower side band portions include hook and loop fasteners.

36. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 34, wherein the foamed plastic material is embedded in a textile layer.

37. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 34, further comprising a tensile proof insert provided within the foamed plastic material.

38. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 37, wherein the tensile proof insert is constructed of nylon.

39. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 37, wherein the foamed plastic material is injection molded to the tensile proof insert.

40. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 34, wherein the headband arrangement is at least in portions individually adaptable to the shape of the back of patient's head.

41. (Withdrawn) A mask system, comprising:
a breathing mask; and
a headband arrangement according to claim 34.

42. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement for a breathing mask, comprising:
a pair of upper side band portions adapted to extend over the patient's ears and transmit mask holding forces to an upper portion of the breathing mask;
a pair of lower side band portions adapted to extend below the patient's ears and transmit mask holding forces to a lower portion of the breathing mask; and
a support structure provided between and structured to interconnect the upper and lower side band portions, the support structure adapted to engage a back of the patient's head, wherein the support structure includes an outer layer constructed of a textile material and an inner layer constructed of a foamed material.

43. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 42, wherein the support structure includes lower leg portions provided to respective lower side band portions and configured to guide the lower side band portions below the patient's ears.

44. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 42, wherein the support structure includes upper leg portions provided to respective upper side band portions and configured to guide the upper side band portions over the patient's ears.

45. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 42, wherein each of the upper and lower side band portions include hook and loop fasteners.

46. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 42, further comprising a tensile proof insert provided within the foamed plastic material.

47. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 46, wherein the tensile proof insert is constructed of nylon.

48. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 42, wherein the support structure is structured to maintain its shape in a sufficiently dimensionally stable manner.

49. (Withdrawn) A headband arrangement according to claim 42, wherein the support structure is adaptable to the shape of the back of patient's head.

50. (Withdrawn) A mask system, comprising:
a breathing mask; and
a headband arrangement according to claim 42.

51. (Currently Amended) A headband arrangement for applying a breathing mask to a user and having a flexible band body comprising upper and lower band portions for transmitting the mask holding forces required for applying the breathing mask, the upper band portion adapted to transmit mask holding forces to an upper portion of the mask and the lower band portion adapted to transmit mask holding forces to a lower portion of the mask, wherein at least portions of the band body are made of a foamed plastic material including molded foam.

52. (New) The headband arrangement according to claim 1, wherein the upper band portion is adapted to extend over the patient's ear and the lower band portion is adapted to extend below the patient's ear.

53. (New) The headband arrangement according to claim 51, wherein the upper band portion is adapted to extend over the patient's ear and the lower band portion is adapted to extend below the patient's ear.